

**Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut in
Support of Raised House Bill No. 5126, An Act Establishing
A Chemical Innovations Institute at the University of
Connecticut and Raised House Bill 5130,
An Act Concerning Child Safe Products**

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March 1, 2010

Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the
Environment Committee:

The American Lung Association in Connecticut submits written
testimony in strong support of Raised House Bill No. 5216, An Act
Establishing a Chemical Innovations Institute at the University of
Connecticut and House Bill 5130, An Act Concerning Child Safe
Products that would help reduce toxic chemicals in workplaces and
products designed for children.

The Lung Association is concerned about this issue because asthma, the
most common childhood chronic disease, is one of the chronic conditions
that have been linked with exposure to toxic chemicals. The doubling of
asthma rates over the past twenty years has prompted a great deal of
new research that examines the role that chemicals and other
environmental risk factors may play in this trend. Genetics cannot
explain such a rapid rise over such a short period of time, and a large
body of evidence from occupational and epidemiological studies
documents that hundreds of chemicals can cause asthma in individuals
previously free of the disease. Overall, about **30% of childhood
asthma is now attributed to toxic chemicals.**¹ Certain chemicals can
also place asthma patients at greater risk for subsequent attacks.^{2, 3} Two
of the most frequently cited chemical risk factors include formaldehyde
(often in particle board, personal care products), phthalates (used to
soften plastics and as an ingredient in perfumes, soaps, and other
personal care products). Elevates risks have also been associated with
the use of certain cleaning chemicals, exposure to carpet and textile wall
paper adhesives.

A Chemical Innovations Institute could help make Connecticut workplaces safer, and could help improve lung health for workers who are currently exposed to toxic substances as part of their job. And phasing out the most highly toxic substances from children's products would help to reduce the exposures of our youngest residents, and also promote safer environments at the facilities where those products are being made and in the communities where they are disposed of.

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for its leadership on this important public health issue, and I urge you to quickly pass these two bills.

Sincerely,

Dawn Mays-Hardy, MS
CT Director Health Promotion and Public Policy
American Lung Association in Connecticut

1. Brody, Charlotte, et al, "The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act," <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/> (accessed Feb 22, 2009).
2. Jean-Luc Malo and Mora Chan-Yeung, "Appendix: Agents Causing Occupational Asthma with Key References," *Asthma in the Workplace, Third Edition*, (New York: Tallor & Francis, 2006).
3. Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics, "AOEC Exposure Codes," <http://www.aoec.org/aoeccode.htm> (accessed September 1, 2009).